

# Annual Report – Special Responsibilities

(Under the South Gloucestershire Scheme of Members' Allowances, certain councillors who perform significant responsibilities over and above those of other councillors, are entitled to receive additional allowances to recognise those extra responsibilities. The Scheme requires councillors in receipt of such allowances to report on their actions. This report is published on the Council's website).

**Report for period: 2013/2014** .....

**Name: Alan Lawrance** .....

**Position held: Lead Member on D. C. East Committee** .....

## A general outline of the special responsibilities you perform

Am a member of the D.C. East Committee and Lead for my political Group. In addition to Site and Committee meetings I attend Agenda Briefings and Joint meetings of the two D. C. Committees. When necessary I meet with the other Group Leaders to support planning meetings and consider devolved decisions relating to applications and conditions. In the absence of the Chair of the Committee I would be expected to undertake that task. Am expected to have a clear knowledge and understanding of applications and procedures.

## Key Milestones/Achievements during the reporting Period

The Committee has contributed to the development of a new Local Plan and Core Strategy for South Gloucester.

The Committee lacks true proportionality in its membership, however, with one exception it has been able to make fair and transparent decisions on all applications. The exception was referred to Full Council but will return to Committee for a decision once further information and negotiations have taken place.

The Committee has considered major developments ( Yate North, Emersons Green) and a wide range of smaller applications. It has considered controversial applications relating to wind turbines, solar panels and for some people consideration of a Cinema and store complex at Yate.

The Committee is respected.

## **What “added value” to the local community have you been able to achieve through your special responsibilities?**

Members of the Committee, and particularly Lead Members, recognise the value of local knowledge in the consideration of applications. There is always a balance to be made between the clinical application of planning law and local needs and concerns. Acting fairly and impartially residents and Parish and Town Councils gain confidence in approaching Lead members for guidance where planning is concerned. The way D. C. Meetings are handled and applications are considered in public give residents greater confidence in the Council.

## **How have your special responsibilities enabled the Council to be more effective?**

Despite there being a significant reduction of staff in Planning and the Council, Targets relating to Planning have usually been met. At Leads' meetings consideration is given to Targets and progress in a range of areas, and forward planning at these meetings have assisted effectiveness. The transparency of the Planning process as viewed at Committee meetings enable the Council to demonstrate an honest and effective process in considering applications.

## **In what ways has the exercise of your special responsibilities supported the core objectives of the Council?**

The Authority has recently formulated, concluded and accepted a new Local Plan and Core Strategy. Lead Members , including myself, acknowledge the idea that South Gloucestershire will continue to be “a great place to live and work in”. They seek to conserve, enhance the natural, historic and built environment and make certain that land is used wisely. They seek high quality design in applications with consideration of issues such as renewable energy and sustainability.